

FIRST REGULAR SESSION

# HOUSE BILL NO. 435

## 91ST GENERAL ASSEMBLY

---

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVES MERIDETH, GRAHAM, LEVIN, (Co-sponsors),  
BRITT AND WALTON.

Read 1<sup>st</sup> time January 18, 2001, and 1000 copies ordered printed.

TED WEDEL, Chief Clerk

1365L.011

---

### AN ACT

To amend chapter 1, RSMo, relating to laws and statutes by adding thereto one new section relating to the recognition of languages used by the deaf community.

---

*Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the state of Missouri, as follows:*

Section A. Chapter 1, RSMo, is amended by adding thereto one new section, to be  
2 known as section 1.029, to read as follows:

**1.029. 1. American Sign Language, as defined in section 209.285, RSMo, or any  
2 other generally accepted means of communication by the deaf community shall be  
3 recognized as autonomous, unique, visual-gestural language with its own syntax, rhetoric,  
4 grammar and morphology.**

**5 2. American Sign Language or any other generally accepted means of  
6 communication by the deaf community shall be recognized as a language of many deaf  
7 persons in the state of Missouri.**

**8 3. The teaching, study and learning of American Sign Language or any other  
9 generally accepted means of communication by the deaf community is encouraged in all  
10 schools in the state of Missouri. Any state educational institution may offer one or more  
11 elective courses in American Sign Language or any other generally accepted means of  
12 communication by the deaf community and when American Sign Language or any other  
13 generally accepted means of communication by the deaf community is offered by a  
14 Missouri educational institution it shall be treated the same as any other foreign language.**

**15 4. Students enrolled in any state educational institutions that offer courses in  
16 American Sign Language or any other generally accepted means of communication by the  
17 deaf community may receive academic credit for such courses by either taking such courses  
18 or by demonstrating proficiency in American Sign Language or any other generally**

19 accepted means of communication by the deaf community if the school gives credit for  
20 demonstrating proficiency in any other foreign language. Academic credit received for  
21 either taking courses in American Sign Language or any other generally accepted means  
22 of communication by the deaf community or demonstrating proficiency in American Sign  
23 Language or any other generally accepted means of communication by the deaf community  
24 shall be counted towards satisfaction of any foreign language requirements of the  
25 institution teaching such courses. Academic credit received for either successful  
26 completion of courses in American Sign Language or any other generally accepted means  
27 of communication by the deaf community in a secondary school or demonstrated  
28 proficiency in American Sign Language or any other generally accepted means of  
29 communication by the deaf community shall be counted towards satisfaction of the foreign  
30 language entrance requirements of any institution of higher education located in the state  
31 of Missouri.

32       5. Only qualified persons who know and use the language shall be employed to  
33 teach American Sign Language or any other generally accepted means of communication  
34 by the deaf community in Missouri schools.

35       6. The Missouri commission for the deaf shall provide assistance, advice, and  
36 guidance on the development, establishment and teaching of courses in American Sign  
37 Language or any other generally accepted means of communication by the deaf community  
38 in Missouri schools when needed and requested.